DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 338 591 SP 033 396

AUTHOR Sandholtz, Judith Haymore
TITLE Demands, Rewards, and Effort: A Balancing Act for Teachers.
INSTITUTION Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching.
REPORT NO P90-125
PUB DATE Oct 90
NOTE 41p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Business Education; Case Studies; Departments; English Instruction; High Schools; *Incentives; Intellectual Disciplines; *Job Satisfaction; Mathematics Instruction; Rewards; Science Instruction; *Secondary School Teachers; *Teacher Burnout; *Teacher Persistence; Teacher Responsibility; *Teaching Conditions; Teaching Load
IDENTIFIERS *Job Stress

ABSTRACT

Studies of teacher satisfaction and workplace conditions generally have focused on the level of the profession or the school site, not on the smaller units within a school or the variations of the work environment within them. This study addresses three limitations of previous research. First, it introduces a theoretical perspective on the balance/imbalance between demands and rewards. Second, it examines within-school variations in workplace conditions and their consequences for teachers. Third, it identifies a range of teacher responses to dissatisfaction, short of actual departure. The research design centered on case studies of four departments (English, mathematics, science, and business) within one high school. The sources of information for the study included observations, document analysis, and in-depth interviews of teachers, department heads, the principal, and the vice-principal of instruction. Findings suggest that when contributions begin to outweigh inducements, teachers take steps to reduce excessive demands; they make choices that affect both themselves and their students, often running counter to their own judgments of what makes an effective teacher. Unfavorable working conditions lead teachers to believe that their contributions are excessive, the ability to promote student growth limited, and psychic rewards unsatisfactory. (LL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

CRC

Center for Research on the Context of Secondary Teaching
School of Education, CERAS Building, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-3084

ED338591

DEMANDS, REWARDS, AND EFFORT: A BALANCING ACT FOR TEACHERS

P90-125

Judith Haymore Sandholtz
Stanford University

October, 1990

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Sandholtz

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

80033396

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

DEMANDS, REWARDS, AND EFFORT: A BALANCING ACT FOR TEACHERS

P90-125

Judith Haymore Sandholtz
Stanford University

October, 1990

DEMANDS, REWARDS AND EFFORT: A BALANCING ACT FOR TEACHERS

Judy Haymore Sandholtz

> I have already considered leaving teaching a few times. I'll say that within five years, I will be out. I am pretty sure. (E3, p.6)

If Emma Woodhouse, a second-year high school English teacher, follows through with her prediction, she will join a large group of teachers who leave the profession early in their careers. According to some calculations, almost one-third of teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching, and the most academically talented teachers leave in the greatest numbers (Schlechty & Vance, 1983). Alarmed by predictions of a teacher shortage by 1992 (Gerard, 1985), researchers have begun to investigate the source of teachers' discontent with the profession.

Decisions to leave teaching often reflect dissatisfaction with a work environment that upsets the balance between the demands and the rewards of teaching (Goodlad, 1984; Rosenholtz, 1985; McLaughlin, Pfeifer, Swanson-Owens, & Yee, 1986). When combined with low salary and limited opportunities for advancement, a poor work environment can be overwhelming. Some researchers contend that the conditions for attracting and retaining the most talented teachers rest more with the conditions of teaching than with salary (Perrone, 1985; Morris, 1981). Entering the profession already aware of the relatively

low salary and status, teachers expect to obtain psychic rewards by promoting students' growth and development (Lieberman & Miller, 1984; Lortie, 1975). Conditions which prevent teachers from obtaining the rewards that originally attracted them to the education profession diminish teachers' satisfaction and commitment, and may ultimately drive them from teaching.

Although the available literature identifies workplace conditions as salient contributors to teachers' decisions to leave the profession, it is limited in three crucial ways. It is largely atheoretical; it places undue emphasis on actual departures from teaching; and it devotes insufficient attention to variable conditions within schools, especially at the secondary level.

Focusing on retention typically assumes a uniform response by teachers to unfavorable working conditions --leaving the profession. However, without satisfactory alternatives to teaching or for various other personal reasons, dissatisfied teachers may choose to remain in the profession but find other ways to deal with their dissatisfaction, such as reducing or adapting their efforts. A phenomenon of "on-the-job retirement" may prove to be a more serious problem for schools than the departure of dissatisfied teachers. In addition, even teachers who express overall satisfaction with the job are likely to seek ways to reduce or compensate for specific demands that become excessive.

Studies of teacher satisfaction and workplace conditions focus primarily at the level of the profession or on the school site. Researchers specifically target the difficult working conditions that exist in urban schools (Corcoran, Walker, & White, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1985). The school is viewed as the unit of improvement with the principal as the key figure in developing a positive work environment. Contending that the school administrator actually has little control over organizational incentives, Spuck (1974) points out that most extrinsic rewards are limited by legal and collective bargaining arrangements and that intrinsic rewards are controlled primarily by the teachers' colleagues, students, and the teachers themselves. One implication is that the work environment of smaller units within the school may influence psychic rewards more than school level factors. However, the literature does not examine variations of the work environment within schools.

This paper addresses the three limitations of previous research. First, it introduces a theoretical perspective on the balance/imbalance between demands and rewards. Second, it examines the within-school variations in workplace conditions and their consequences for teachers. Finally, this paper identifies a range of teacher responses to dissatisfaction, short of actual departure.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Central to the continued existence and operation of any organization is its ability to retain members and to motivate them to contribute productively to the organization. Building on the Barnard-Simon theory of organizational equilibrium, March and Simon (1958) propose the inducements-contributions balance as an explanation of members' decisions to leave an organization. Each participant receives inducements from the organization which motivate the individual to, in turn, contribute to the organization. An individual is motivated to continue his participation in an organization "only as long as the inducements offered him are as great or greater (measured in terms of his values and in terms of alternatives open to him) than the contributions he is asked to make" (p.84).

In the education profession, the major "contributions" of teachers relate to the teaching process. Besides the actual hours spent teaching in the classroom, secondary teachers devote additional hours to preparing lessons, grading homework and exams, completing forms, background reading, counseling students, tutoring, conducting make-up work, hall duty and study hall supervisions, extracurricular assignments, and professional activities (Rutter, 1986). These teacher contributions occur in a variety of workplace contexts, some of which place additional demands on teachers. For instance, teachers often face large classes composed of students with various ability levels; and, in

some schools, teachers are asked to teach courses for which they have no formal training or experience. In the absence of additional supports, the demand side of the balance may begin to outweigh the rewards.

Occupational "inducements" often are classified as extrinsic or intrinsic rewards. Extrinsic rewards include such public benefits as high salary, status, and power; they are extrinsic "in the sense that they exist independently of the individual who occupies the role" (Lortie, 1975, p.101). Extrinsic rewards tend to have an objective quality since they are experienced by all participants. Often classified as a type of extrinsic reward, ancillary rewards refer to objective characteristics of the work which are considered to be rewards by some participants but not others; for example, the work schedule of teaching, with summers off, may be rewarding for some teachers. Intrinsic rewards, also called psychic rewards, consist "entirely of subjective valuations made in the course of work engagement" (p. 101). Due to their subjective nature, psychic rewards can vary from person to person.

Teaching, compared with other professions, tends to be relatively low in extrinsic rewards such as pay, power, and prestige. However, researchers report that teachers' primary source of motivation comes from psychic rewards, particularly promoting students' learning (Lortie, 1975; McLaughlin et al., 1986; Lieberman & Miller, 1984; Harris and Associates, 1985). Other psychic rewards in teaching accrue from collegial

stimulation and support, associations with students, and enjoyment of teaching activities (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). Intrinsic rewards may provide more inducement for teachers because of the link to effort. In the education profession, effort in the workplace makes little difference in the receipt of extrinsic rewards; for example, teachers' salaries typically are determined by a fixed salary schedule based on education and experience, not on performance. However, a teacher's efforts can influence sources of psychic rewards, such as student learning.

Studies of teaching identify a decline in the ability of teachers to derive intrinsic rewards from their work (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). Researchers link the decreasing psychic rewards of teachers to the organizational conditions under which they work (Rosenholtz, 1985; Goodlad, 1984). Rather than promoting teacher effectiveness and satisfaction, school conditions often promote failure of teachers and prevent teachers from obtaining the rewards that initially drew them to teaching (McLaughlin et al., 1986). Combined with relatively low extrinsic rewards, the decline of psychic rewards may upset the inducements-contributions balance for teachers. When the demands of teaching outweigh the rewards, teachers may question their commitment to and continued participation in the teaching profession. Teachers may not choose the drastic measure of leaving teaching but instead seek other methods to restore the balance. The various ways in which teachers respond to this imbalance ultimately affect students.

METHODOLOGY

In order to examine variations of the work environment within a given school context, the research design centered on case studies of four departments within one high school. The sources of information for the study included observations, document analysis, and in-depth interviews of teachers, department heads, the principal, and the vice-principal of instruction. Since subject matter is the principal distinguishing feature of high school departments, contrast by subject matter was the main criterion for selecting the departments for in-depth study. The four focal departments in this study were English, mathematics, science, and business. Table 1 summarizes contrasts among the four subject areas.

Table 1: Summary of Subject Matter Contrasts

Subject matter characteristics	Subject areas			
	English	Math	Science	Business
Interdependence	*	+	-	*
Resource dependence	-	-	+	+
Skill orientation	-	-	-	+
Rate of change in field	-	-	*	+
Status of field	+	+	+	-
Required or elective	req.	req.	req.	elec.

+ : high

* : medium
- : low

Mathematics, science, and English, though all academic subjects, differ in the nature of the discipline. Mathematics is a highly interdependent subject with a clear hierarchical structure. Due to the technical nature of science and the need for laboratories and equipment, science is the most dependent on resources. Science, less interdependent than mathematics, includes a number of fairly independent sub-specialties (e.g., earth science, biology, chemistry, physics). In terms of interdependence and resource dependence, English falls somewhere between mathematics and science; the distinguishing feature of English is the heavy emphasis on literature and composition. Business is a skill-oriented and changing subject area which does not enjoy the high status of the other academic fields. Business also provides a contrast in terms of elective and required courses. While students are required to take courses in English, mathematics, and science, they elect to take courses in business.

Hartfield High is fairly typical in terms of size (1350 students), number of departments (12), department administration (a formal department head position), and socio-economic status (middle -- with a range from low to high). The majority of teachers are experienced, and many have taught at the school for over 20 years. With desegregation in the district and boundary changes, the socio-economic status of students changed over the past years from one skewed toward the high end to one resembling

a bell curve. As the composition of the student body has changed, test scores have declined.

The number of teachers with long careers at Hartfield High is evidence of low turnover. This raises a number of significant questions in light of the challenges resulting from changes in the student body. The changing demographics have created more difficult circumstances for teachers, yet the turnover rate has remained low. The inducements/contributions framework allows us to make sense of this seeming paradox. If supports or rewards have increased along with the demands, balance is maintained, thus explaining why teachers stay. If supports or rewards have not increased, then teachers face two alternative means of restoring the balance: to leave the job or to reduce their efforts. The absence of acceptable employment alternatives would account for low turnover but would also lead us to expect reduced effort.

FINDINGS

The conditions surrounding teachers' work are not the same throughout Hartfield High; important differences exist both across and within departments. These variations affect the contributions teachers are asked to make and the inducements they receive from teaching. When the contributions begin to outweigh the inducements, the teachers take steps to reduce the excessive demands. Their responses correspond to the specific demands placed on them and reflect the degree of imbalance between the

demands and the rewards. The following sections summarize the variations in demands on teachers, describe the varying rewards for teachers, and identify the teachers' responses to perceived imbalances between contributions and inducements.

Contributions/Demands

Workload

Workload, the primary source of demands placed upon teachers, varied according to the nature of the subject matter and the pedagogical techniques associated with the field. In math and business, the correction of student work tended to be objective and thus more quickly and easily accomplished. However, in English, the subjective nature of the students' work made grading assignments one of the most time consuming elements of the job. Rather than making a simple judgment of right or wrong, the English teachers read for content, coherence, grammar, and punctuation. Since the curriculum was based on a variety of literature rather than one textbook, the teachers faced increased recordkeeping duties just in issuing and keeping track of books. Teachers who moved into English from other subject areas contended that, in addition to the demands of correcting papers, teaching English involved extensive background preparation, such as reading and studying novels.

In contrast, the part-time teachers in the math department felt that teaching math required less work than teaching courses in their own department. The students used one textbook

throughout the year, and the structure of math freed the teachers from a great deal of curriculum development and preparation. In addition, math did not require the lab set-ups that characterize science teaching. Since science is heavily dependent on equipment and supplies, teachers faced additional demands such as ordering materials, labeling and working with supplies, and setting up labs.

Subject matter differences within each field also resulted in variations in workload within each department. Business courses such as Computer Applications, where the subject matter changes rapidly, required more preparation time because the teachers needed to learn and master the new content on their own, continually create or revise curriculum, and provide more individual help to students both in and out of class. In addition, equipment and supplies needed to be located, evaluated, and purchased. In contrast, curriculum for typing classes has existed for many years, and students were better able to work on their own during class -- sometimes allowing the teacher time for correcting student work.

In the science department, courses such as chemistry demanded more preparation and time in organizing and setting up labs. Working with chemicals required particular care, and setting up a number of different lab stations for several classes increased the workload of teachers. Whereas biology labs, such as dissecting frogs, extended over a period of days, chemistry labs entailed more frequent set-ups.

The specialty courses in English -- drama, journalism, and speech -- typically involved fewer writing assignments but more extracurricular activities. Producing the school newspaper or staging and producing school plays required a great deal of time beyond the school day.

Within the math department, the more advanced courses, such as calculus, required more preparation both in terms of background knowledge and class presentations. The difference in the pacing of the curriculum and the difficulty of the material resulted in variations in the amount of preparation.

While large class size presented difficulties for all teachers, the particular way in which teachers' workload was affected varied across the subject areas. Additionally, the pedagogical requirements of some subjects helped to limit class size. For instance, in the business courses where students work individually at machines, the amount of equipment determined the maximum size of the classes. However, additional students in an English class simply required more chairs and textbooks -- items that are much less expensive and more easily obtained than computers or other types of equipment.

Large class sizes in English significantly increased the amount of time teachers spent grading papers. Compounding the problem was that fact that the courses with the longest and most complex writing assignments also had the lowest rates of attrition. The number of students in the classes also influenced the teaching methods that the English teachers could use

successfully. Whereas students in a typing class worked individually, common teaching strategies in English involved student participation within a group structure. With large class sizes, the opportunity for all students to participate was severely constrained. In most of the math and business courses, large class sizes affected the teachers' ability to provide individual help and tutoring to students -- both in and out of class. For science teachers, large class sizes put a strain on limited equipment and supplies and inhibited the teachers' ability, during lab activities, to monitor the safety of the students and to provide individual feedback.

Declining enrollments in the business department, stemming from state mandates requiring more units in the academic subjects for high school graduation, resulted in changes in teaching assignments. Due to the range of business courses offered and the small enrollment, all of the teachers faced multiple preparations. One business teacher taught five different courses during the year, four preparations each semester, including one outside of the business department. The change in graduation requirements increased student enrollment in the math, science, and English departments, leading to multiple preparations for teachers in these departments as well as the need for part-time teachers. Moreover, the increased enrollment came mostly in the lower level courses, changing the teaching assignment of many teachers to courses that placed additional demands on them.

Multiple preparations took the form of teaching different courses, or different levels within the same course; in both cases, the teacher's workload increased. When teaching assignments spanned two or more departments, the workload increased even more. Teachers had to update their subject matter knowledge and maintain membership in two different departments. In addition, teachers frequently felt less motivated as well as less effective when teaching outside their area of interest and expertise.

This situation also occurred in departments with a variety of sub-specialties. For example, the science field includes diverse areas such as biology, physics, chemistry, and earth science. Changes in student enrollment forced some teachers to teach science courses for which they were credentialed but felt academically ill-prepared.

Class Composition

Some variations in class composition also reflected differences in subject matter. Because the content of math is clearly defined and hierarchically sequenced, the math teachers found that students tended to enter courses with roughly the same background knowledge. In contrast, the English teachers were unsure about what skills and materials their students covered in previous courses. There is less consensus in the field about the content of English courses at various levels, so students'

background knowledge varied depending on who taught the students in earlier courses.

The number of elective and required courses in the department also influenced class composition. As an elective area, the business department eliminated their course sequencing and prerequisites in order to attract as many students as possible into their courses. However, by offering courses without prerequisites, the business teachers found that many of the students came into class without the necessary basic skills. The elective areas also tended to attract fewer college-bound students because, as the graduation and college entrance requirements became more specific, many students simply couldn't take as many elective courses.

Collegial Interaction

Subject matter differences similarly influenced the need for collegial interaction and professional sharing in the four departments. Regular opportunities for interaction with colleagues is identified as an important feature of a successful work environment (Little, 1982; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rosenholtz, 1989). However, the set structure of math decreased the amount of curriculum coordination required among the teachers; the textbook fulfilled that function instead.

In the English department, the subject matter was less definite and not clearly hierarchical; consequently, there was a greater need to coordinate curriculum so that the content of

courses was sequential and didn't overlap. Decisions about the purchase of textbooks were not as clear-cut in English given the extensive pool of appropriate literature; and since several teachers used the same novels during the course of a year, book requests also needed to be coordinated. In addition, the nature of the subject matter encourages discussion among teachers, although time demands often prevented it. Whereas the quadratic equation provokes little debate, literature draws out differing analyses and interpretations.

The changing nature of the business field drove teachers to more collegial interaction and instructional sharing in order to prepare to teach new courses and to update their curriculum. This collegial stimulation, besides being a reward in itself, led to additional psychic rewards by improving teaching skills.

In contrast, little collegial interaction or instructional sharing occurred in the science department. The distinction between physical science and biological science limited technical assistance among the teachers. Because of the differences in the two areas, the teachers saw little to be gained from working together.

Resources

In the face of budget constraints, the subject areas that were most dependent on resources suffered the most. Both the business and science departments required equipment that is expensive to purchase and replace, and changes in the fields made

it necessary to update the equipment more frequently. Computer equipment and software were particularly expensive and subject to change; in addition, copyright laws restricted the number of copies of software that the school could make. The declining status of the field compounded the resource problem for the business department. Because of the declining enrollments in business courses, the department had more difficulty competing for already scarce resources. In contrast, the head of the math department explained that math doesn't require as much in terms of resources, and therefore, the department encountered fewer inadequacies.

Along with expensive equipment, the business and science departments needed certain physical facilities that could be expensive. Due to declining enrollment, the business department actually had more rooms than teachers; but the science department faced a reverse situation. The department had more teachers than science rooms, and the quality of their facilities didn't begin to compare with the updated, newly remodeled science labs in schools in a neighboring district. Vacant rooms in a school cannot be transformed easily or inexpensively into science rooms. Consequently, the math and English departments had more opportunity to take advantage of any available rooms in the school. However, this also resulted in department members being spread throughout various wings of the school, which hindered collegial interaction.

Teachers, in all subject areas, who were assigned to teach in several different rooms experienced increased demands. But switching rooms placed an even greater burden on science teachers because of the nature of teaching science. One teacher, scheduled to teach in three different rooms, carted necessary materials and lab equipment from room to room. Having to vacate their rooms during preparation periods, the other science teachers found it difficult to quickly remove all their materials and then set up labs for the subsequent class period.

With the large class sizes, many teachers discovered that the space within their classrooms was becoming inadequate. Students were often crowded and close together, sitting at make-shift desks or tables around the periphery of the room where teachers had difficulty even seeing them. This situation occurred less frequently in business courses where the number of students matched the amount of equipment. Adding several chairs in an English or math classroom was much less difficult than finding space for additional typewriters and desks, for example.

At Hartfield High, student clerks, rather than adult teacher aides, were the major resource for teachers with respect to grading and clerical tasks. However, subject matter differences often determined to what extent teachers were able to successfully use the help of student clerks. Due to the objective nature of the homework assignments in math, many teachers turned over homework correction and recording to a student clerk. However, in English, the use of student clerks

was more limited because of the subjectivity involved in most of the grading. Since the teachers felt the need to read papers themselves in order to gauge student progress, they were also hesitant to use adult readers. In the science department, tasks such as labeling and working with supplies or setting up labs were not easily delegated to students.

Student Behavior

Pedagogical strategies commonly associated with the various subjects both affected and were affected by student behavior. Student discipline problems occurred infrequently in most of the business classes, particularly the machine-oriented courses. Besides the fact that the students elected to take the courses, they worked individually at a machine. Because they sat a greater distance from and interacted less with other students, the potential for problems decreased. In courses such as drama, where the students were not isolated at desks and interaction was expected, the potential for problems increased. Student motivation may also have been greater in courses such as typing because, as the teachers explained, the students could see development of a skill and judge their successes more easily.

Student absences had differing effects across the subject areas because of the differences in pedagogical strategies. Since students worked individually in many of the business classes, the daily classroom activities were less affected by student absence. However, few students had the necessary

equipment at home for make-up work; therefore teachers needed to arrange time during lunch or before or after school for students to work in the classroom. The classroom teaching methods of math teachers were similarly unaffected by student absence, but the teachers often provided tutorials, which required additional direct contact time. Since learning builds on former learning, problems arose when students didn't understand the earlier material in math.

In science and English, when students attended sporadically or came to class unprepared, the effectiveness of commonly-used teaching methods declined. Group work and strategies that build on a previous day's activities became almost impossible to carry out. Discussions among students who hadn't done the reading became meaningless, and students couldn't edit each other's writing if they were absent or hadn't done the work. Science labs were difficult to carry out if students didn't receive the preliminary explanations, and make-up of labs was often unfeasible.

In sum, the demands on teachers were not uniform throughout the school. While conditions, such as large class size and budget constraints, affected most teachers in the school, the extent and the ways in which these conditions increased the demands on teachers varied across and within subject areas. Institutional policies and procedures, such as graduation requirements or the designation of required and elective courses,

had differing effects across departments. But the main variations in demands stemmed from the interaction of the subject matter and the working conditions.

Inducements/Rewards

Similar to findings in other studies, the most important rewards for the teachers at Hartfield High stemmed from their work with students and emphasized student progress. The teachers felt a sense of accomplishment and reward for their efforts when they saw signs of students learning.

> My satisfaction is watching kids learn something. There's that spark that's there when they catch on and you see them doing something. (B4, p.10)
>
> The satisfactions are the relationships with the students . . . I think that I am contributing to the development of the lives of these kids. (S4, p.5,7)
>
> It is exciting when I feel like they are learning something -- a sense of accomplishment. (E2, p.8)
>
> I enjoy working with youngsters. I have a feeling of accomplishment . . . When the little student that hasn't achieved all year gets something, it makes you feel warm all over. (B3, p.8)
>
> Out of about 90 students (in my three regular track classes), 15 have shown that they will be able to go on to college. There is definite improvement in study habits, ability to think, and to write papers that are readable. It is that kind of growth that makes teaching exciting. (Eng10, p.2)

Since the most important satisfactions stemmed from watching students learn and progress, the teachers expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with conditions which decreased their effectiveness as teachers and over which they had no control.

The previous section described school conditions that frequently prevented the teachers from obtaining psychic rewards from their work. Heavy workloads led teachers to believe not only that their contributions were excessive but also that their ability to promote student growth, an important psychic reward was limited. Teachers perceived that large classes hindered effective instruction tailored to student needs; large classes composed of student with a broad range of academic levels compounded their sense of frustration. Multiple preparations increased the teachers' workloads and often lessened teachers' sense of effectiveness, particularly when teachers were assigned outside their area of expertise. Inadequate resources detracted from the act of teaching and required teachers to spend more time developing materials and less time providing student feedback. Student absence and lack of motivation disrupted the instructional strategies of teachers and detracted from student achievement and teacher-student associations, important psychic rewards. Infrequent opportunities for professional sharing among teachers increased their sense of isolation and undermined intrinsic rewards such as collegial stimulation and improvement of teaching skills.

As described in the previous section, the demands on teachers were not uniform throughout Hartfield High. Similarly, the ability of teachers to achieve psychic rewards from students' growth and development varied. Beyond the previously identified workplace conditions, the main variations stemmed from the

following dimensions: the level of courses taught; subject-specific differences in measuring student progress; opportunities to observe student growth over time; the relevance of the subject to student lives; and the status of the discipline.

The ability of teachers to garner rewards from their work with students varied according to the level of courses they taught. Teachers of the lower level courses faced greater problems with student behavior, absenteeism, tardiness, and drop-outs; in addition, student success was less readily observed, particularly with respect to grades and competency test scores. As the teachers described, the inability to see student progress resulting from one's teaching efforts was disappointing and reduced one's feelings of effectiveness.

> You get worn down with these lower level classes where you are putting forth a lot of effort and getting nothing back from it. And the kids aren't getting anything. They are not taking the classes because they want to; they are taking them because they have to. And they don't want to learn. So you are dealing with this all of the time. And it is demoralizing. (S5, p.10)

> I was probably least effective with the remedial classes. People said I was doing a fine job, but if you look at the number of kids who finally went through the whole program and graduated, it was minimal. If you look at improved reading scores, it was minimal. (E5, p.15)

In the higher level courses, the students were more motivated, turned in assignments more consistently, and received higher grades and test scores. In addition, the subject matter was more intellectually stimulating for the teachers.

> [Teaching] calculus in obviously more satisfying than Algebra .5 because you have the kid who wants to learn

> . . And let's face it -- when you go to school to become a math major, you like the challenge of the more difficult problems -- and the more interesting problems. (M3, p.4)

The nature of the subject matter also influenced the ease with which teachers were able to gauge student progress. For example, in business courses that were particularly skills-oriented, such as typing and computers, student progress was more objectively measured and occured in small increments, resulting in increased motivation for students and greater psychic rewards for teachers.

> I particularly like watching them (the students) at the beginning of the semester -- and what I teach can be measured more easily than English or social studies -- and you see them not be able to do a thing. And then at the end, doggone it, they really can. And I have something to do with that. Now how much and in what proportion I don't know, but I have something to do with that. And that I like. That helps. (B4, p.11)

In contrast, the subject matter in English made it more complicated to measure and observe student growth and development. The English teachers reported greater difficulty in both gauging and displaying their students' success. Mr. Churchill remembered going around to the various rooms during a parent-teacher night and looking at the impressive exhibits of students work.

> You would go down to the shop, and you would see these beautiful pieces of furniture -- this wonderful desk, this great boat, a boat 24 feet long and shining and palpable. And that teacher was a success because here was the boat that the student made. I think that the art teacher or the homemaking teacher gets some of that. In English, we get a poem or an essay maybe. That's harder to show, harder to explain to anyone, harder to remember really given that there are so many

other bad essays that we see next to the good one. (E12, p.18)

However, the nature of English provided teachers greater opportunity for close teacher-student associations which increased psychic rewards. English teachers enjoyed being able "to really get to know and understand the students and their values." Whereas math assignments were very objective and impersonal, English assignments required students to formulate and communicate their thoughts. Through essays and class discussions, teacher explored pertinent issues with students and began to tap their inner feelings.

Teachers' opportunities to observe and take credit for **student growth over time** also varied across subject areas. Some teachers experienced greater satisfaction from students because they were able to develop relationships and view student progress over a number of years. For example, when Mrs. Ward taught biology, human biology and advanced placement biology, she often had students for three years in a row. This situation rarely occurred in business where, due to changes in graduation and college entrance requirements, students generally didn't enroll in more than one business course during their four years in high school.

The direct **relevance of a subject** to students' lives influenced teachers' psychic rewards from their work with students. The teachers of the biological sciences pointed out that they could teach "just by bringing in things from the newspaper everyday." They also credited the continual advances

in their field with helping them keep the students interested in the courses. In contrast, the physics teacher had difficulty conveying to students the relevance of physics to their current or future lives.

Psychic rewards for teachers also varied depending on the status of a particular discipline. The societal importance placed on certain subject areas provided additional psychic rewards for teachers by increasing the value placed on the teachers' work. While areas such as science and mathematics are increasingly emphasized as important subjects, business and other vocational subjects suffer from the shifting status. This decline cut at the core of what the business teachers considered their raison d'etre. Besides sending the message that their work as business teachers was less important, the lack of support for their subject area forced teachers into assignments in other subject areas where they felt less effective and less motivated.

Responses to Inducements/Contributions Imbalance

The preceding sections describe the conditions leading to teachers' perceptions of imbalances between contributions and inducements. As the teachers developed a sense that the demands outweighed the rewards, they looked for changes that would reduce excessive demands. However, many of the changes that the teachers felt would improve their teaching situation were beyond their control. Therefore, in order to correct an imbalance between demands and rewards, the teachers looked to measures

within their power. The severity of their responses reflected the perceived degree of imbalance. Their responses fell into four main categories: leaving the profession; exiting teaching on a temporary basis; negotiating changes in teaching assignments; and reducing effort.

At times when the demands were greatest and their rewards lowest, the teachers considered the most extreme responses, such as **leaving the profession** or opting for early retirement.

> You walk in the door and think -- what's going to happen today? It had become very unpleasant, and I had gotten very ill. I had gotten down to about 90 pounds, and I broke out with nerves. And I just needed -- I had to get out. (B3, p.2)

More Hartfield High teachers considered leaving the profession than actually followed through with that action. For some experienced teachers, the investment of years into their profession and the need to support a family prevented them from leaving.

> The only thing I can say is to use a word like tenacious. I am going to stay here. I must. I must teach until I am 60. Because the retirement thing, I cannot do otherwise. At about age 50, I came close to leaving. Because I had invested so many years in teaching and my children being their age, I just felt like it was a risk I didn't want to take. (B2, p.11)

For others, scarce or unappealing job alternatives kept them in teaching. Even in areas such as math and science, where recent college graduates encounter abundant job opportunities with competitive salaries, experienced teachers found limited opportunities. A move into industry would require taking an

entry-level position, and therefore a cut in salary, or additional training.

> If I could go back into industry, I would do it today. No question about it. (S5, p.14)
>
> If I even had a masters, I would have tried for industry much sooner than this. (S4, p.8)
>
> I don't feel like I could go out into business or industry. I don't feel that confident. My math is such a limited background. . . it is limited to high school math. I mean for 20 years, you have done Geometry, Algebra II, and Trigonometry. You are not really a mathematician. (M4, p.7)

In contrast, the beginning teachers felt more confident about their ability to locate attractive job alternatives, had invested less time into the teaching profession, and found their current teaching salaries to be less than many other entry-level positions. Additionally, beginning teachers frequently received difficult teaching assignments. Ms. Woodhouse, who had two preparations and total responsibility for the school newspaper, felt inundated with work.

> It is a really tiring job. I didn't think it would be so (much work). Basically, I am on the road at 6:00 a.m., and I get home at 5:30 p.m. or something. And then I am supposed to grade papers. It is cramming a 12-month-a-year job into nine months. I just didn't expect it to be so much. (E3, p.1)

Given the demands of the job, she couldn't understand the low salary and the general lack of respect for teachers. From her perspective, the salary differential between beginning and experienced teachers made no sense because she was "doing just as much of a job as anybody else, if not more." Ms. Woodhouse, discouraged by the salary and the amount of time she is spending

on the job, seriously questioned whether she would be teaching five years from now.

Ms. Bennet, another teacher in the early years of her career, was happy with her teaching assignment in the math department and planned to remain for several more years; but she was formulating plans for other job alternatives in order to "keep her options open." The possibility of receiving a "really bad teaching assignment" and the low salaries left her uncertain about staying with teaching for the long term. Leaving the profession entails fewer risks for young, beginning teachers and often holds more promise for greater rewards.

In most cases, the teachers, beginning and experienced, wanted to stay in teaching -- but with improved conditions.

> I don't want to leave teaching. I love teaching. I want the circumstances to be better and I would like the kids to be more motivated and I would like society to be in a better state to receive what we can do in teaching. (E5, p.12)

Rather than leaving the profession altogether, teachers turned to alternative ways to bring demands back in line with rewards.

Temporary exits from teaching consisted of taking a sabbatical or a leave. This allowed teachers to take a break from teaching without giving up their jobs. Some teachers hoped to find an alternative job during that time while others hoped for a renewed attitude to bring back to teaching. Inevitably these decisions were prompted by situations that increased the demands on teachers and lessened their effectiveness.

> I think that difficult remedial class was part of what was taking the sap out of me. Back at the time that I was deciding these things, that class was a daily anchor around my neck and made me feel as if I had to do something drastic. (E12, p.19)

Other teachers managed to negotiate **changes in teaching assignments** such as switching schools, training and moving to a different subject area, or cutting back on teaching by accepting more administrative responsibilities. Often a change in teaching assignment improved the balance between demands and rewards, thus restoring a teacher's desire to continue in the profession. For example, Mrs. Jennings, an experienced business teacher specializing in accounting, applied for a sabbatical the year she was assigned to teach two remedial English classes. She struggled not only with the new subject matter but also with serious discipline problems -- something she hadn't encountered in her business classes. Having applied too late to leave the next fall, she returned to Hartfield High and a different teaching assignment -- business and social studies. Though still teaching outside of her field, she didn't experience the same problems with student behavior. The year reestablished her sense of self-efficacy and even eliminated her urge to take a sabbatical. But the negative experience stands out as a benchmark of what would drive her out of teaching.

> If I were having year after year like that one year I had, I wouldn't be teaching. If it got that bad, forget it. (B1, p.10)

The most common response to a perceived imbalance between contributions and inducements was a **reduction in effort.**

Teachers altered teaching strategies and methods in correspondence to the specific, excessive demands placed on the teachers. The forms of reduced effort included: changes in in-class instruction; reduction in out-of-class preparation and grading; and restriction of interactions with students, parents, and colleagues.

In-class Instruction

Given the large class sizes and the nature of their subject matter, the English teachers felt most pressured by the time needed to correct student work. Consequently, many teachers felt forced to reduce the number of writing assignments.

> I had to cut back on the number of writing assignments, and I don't feel guilty in the least about it anymore. I used to take my sick leave time, I'll admit it, to stay home and simply catch up on my essays. I won't do that anymore. I used to be willing to stay up almost all night doing papers. I won't do that anymore. (E7, p.4)

One teacher's strategy was not to assign another essay until she was able to return the previous one to students.

In the science department, difficulty in acquiring necessary equipment or in setting up labs due to room changes prompted teachers to limit the number or type of labs included in their courses.

> So for the AP (advanced placement) class, I just don't even bother to have labs; I don't have the equipment for it. They have no hands-on skills at all. (S5, p.5)

> The rooms have different set-ups . . . so I just choose to do what is possible in all three rooms. (S3, p.3)

Without an eyewash in his particular room, a general science teacher refused to handle chemicals, something that he felt would enhance the section on chemistry.

The behavior of students also influenced the choice of teaching strategies. When students didn't attend regularly or come to class prepared, the teachers eliminated certain types of teaching methods, such as groupwork or strategies that build on a previous day's activities. In many of the lower level classes, not only did the total number of students vary from day to day but the group was frequently composed of different students each day. One science teacher resorted to making every day a "self-contained" unit. Sporadic attendance in science classes also made lab experiences almost impossible.

A popular teaching method in English involved having students edit one another's writing; but if students hadn't completed their assignments, the whole approach fell apart. Discussions among students who hadn't read the literature became meaningless. When students consistently failed to complete their homework assignments, teachers in all subject areas often ended up lowering their expectations and incorporating more in-class assignments, a strategy which ultimately reduces instructional time and limits the amount of material that can be covered during the year.

Out-of-class Preparation and Grading

When teaching courses for which they had little academic training or experience, some teachers lessened demands in curriculum development and classroom preparation by "just using the textbook and the accompanying test bank" or by relying on numerous films and worksheets.

When paperwork became overwhelming, the teachers took steps to reduce the amount or type of grading. One method was to make tests more objective, so the correction could be done by machine or a student clerk.

> I cope by probably giving more tests that can be corrected by machine than I would ideally like to give. And I hope and pray that I will have a student clerk with good general abilities who can assist me. (E9, p.4)

A math teacher, who stated that he recently starting using some scantron tests in order to make grading easier, pointed out the disadvantages of that strategy.

> Cheating, guessing, (and) you don't get to see the work so you don't really know how they have worked it out. You can't give partial credit. The higher up the math hierarchy of classes you go, the more the work becomes an important part of what you want to look at. (M4, p.2)

In other subject areas, purely objective tests restricted the teachers' evaluation of student understanding and also reduced the development of students' critical thinking and writing skills. Besides adapting the form of testing, teachers lessened paperwork demands by assessing student progress less frequently.

> You come to the point where you start to make choices as to how closely you will watch a student's progress. You can't watch it every single step of the way so you start watching it at larger intervals. (B4, p.5)

Another response to excessive time demands was to put in set hours and refrain from taking work home. One science teacher adopted that strategy the year she was assigned four different preparations, including a lower level math class, in four different rooms located in two distant wings of the school.

> I made up my mind at that time that I was <u>not</u> going to take anything home. If I couldn't finish it here at school, it just wouldn't get done. And I was exhausted every day. . . I told them that year that I was <u>not</u> going to take on any extracurricular things also. (S4, p.3)

Other teachers reported having made similar resolutions about work hours, making priorities about what gets done and accepting the fact that they can't accomplish all they would like.

> Everything has priorities, and the things with the lower priorities just don't get done. You don't do all of the neat things that you would like for class, for example. I don't spend hours on my Macintosh at home doing neat work papers for my kids. I don't have the kind of inventories I would like to have computerized because I don't have time to do it. Reports, memos, that kind of thing sometimes just don't get written. Sometimes papers don't get graded. (B4, p.5)

Restriction of Interactions

Due to large class sizes, many math teachers reported that they simply didn't provide the amount of individual help, both in and out of class, that may be necessary.

> When there are 34 students in a class, I don't go around and see their work. I might answer the same five people's questions. And I know there are a couple of them falling through the cracks. It is just too exhausting to try and help them at lunch. (M2, p.4)

Some math teachers stated that they did little, if any, tutoring. Others would tutor students during lunch or after school but began to draw limits when it became unwieldy.

> I will meet them at lunch a few times or work with them the best I can, but with 154 students, I would be a wreck. (M2, p.4)

Rather than waiting to be assigned to extracurricular duties, teachers often lessened time demands by volunteering for extracurricular assignments that were less time consuming. However, the assignments that required less time generally involved little interaction with students. Consequently, teachers had even fewer opportunities to observe student development, an important source of rewards and fulfillment.

Although teachers recognized the benefit in contacting parents, many teachers completed and sent the necessary referral forms for student absences but initiated few phone calls to parents. By waiting for parents to contact them, the teachers could restrict the out-of-school time required to consult with parents.

Time demands also led teachers to restrict the amount of collegial interaction and cooperative planning that they engaged in, thus limiting another potential source of reward. By staying in their rooms after school and during lunch periods to work or to allow students to make up assignments, many teachers gained

time but lost opportunities for collegial sharing. The benefits of cooperative planning failed to outweigh the press for time.

Consequences for Teachers and Students

In finding ways to respond to an imbalance between demands and rewards, the teachers felt forced into compromising choices that affected both themselves and their students. Many of the strategies they adopted run counter to their judgment of what makes an effective teacher. Comments such as "I don't feel guilty about it anymore" illustrate the difficulty teachers had in originally making these decisions. In the face of overwhelming demands, their alternatives seemed equally unpalatable and destined to reduce their sense of success. Unfavorable working conditions led teachers to believe that their contributions were excessive and that their ability to promote student growth was limited. Yet in attempting to reduce the excessive demands, the only measures within the teachers' power similarly undermined their sense of effectiveness and thus their most important reward -- watching students learn and progress.

The need to attract and retain talented teachers in the education profession is pressing. However, attention to working conditions addresses a larger concern than the 30 percent who leave -- namely the 70 percent who stay and find their own ways of restoring the balance between demands, rewards, and effort.

References

Corcoran, T.B. (1988). Schoolwork: Perspectives on workplace reform in the public schools. Paper prepared for the Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching, Stanford University. (Technical Report No. CRC 88-600).

Corcoran, T., Walker, L. & White, J.L. (1988). Working in urban schools. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership.

Feiman-Nemser, S. & Floden, R. (1986). The cultures of teaching. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of Research in Teaching, Third Edition. New York: Macmillan Company.

Gerard, D.E. (1985). Projections of Education Statistics to 1992-93. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, p. 148.

Goodlad, J. (1984). A place called school: Prospects for the future. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Harris and Associates. (1985). Survey of the American teacher 1985. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

Lieberman, A. & Miller, L. (1984). Teachers, their world, and their work: Implications for school improvement. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Lortie, D. (1975). Schoolteacher. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

March, J.G. & Simon, H.A. (1958). Organizations. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

McLaughlin, M., Pfeifer, S., Swanson-Owens, D., & Yee, S. (1986). Why teachers won't teach. Phi Delta Kappan, 67, 420-426.

Morris, M. (1981). The public school as workplace: The principal as a key element in teacher satisfaction. A Study of Schooling in the United States (Technical Report #32). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 214 899).

Perrone, V. (1985). Portraits of high schools. Princeton, N.J.: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Rosenholtz, S. (1985). Effective schools: Interpreting the evidence. American Journal of Education, 93, 352-358.

Rutter, R. (1986). Profile of the profession. Social Education, 50(4), 252-255.

Schlechty, P.C., & Vance, V.S. (1983). Recruitment, selection, and retention: the shape of the teaching force. The Elementary School Journal, 83(4), 469-487.

Spuck, D.W. (1974). Reward structures in the the public schools. Educational Administration Quarterly, 10(1), 18-34.